COLLABORATION STATION: TULARE BASIN WATERSHED INITIATIVE (3K)

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Southern Sierra and Tulare Basin resource managers must collaborate to effectively prepare for the widespread effects of climate change. As an entity that works throughout the Tulare Basin watershed, the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners is uniquely positioned to coordinate upper and lower watershed managers and stakeholders to address management issues under a changing climate. Through its Tulare Basin Watershed Initiative (TBWI) and working with groups involved in California's Integrated Regional Water Management process, the TBWI team coordinates diverse stakeholders to identify and implement multi-benefit projects to improve water supply and quality, develop sustainable and wildlife-friendly flood management projects, enhance and protect wildlife habitat, and integrate climate mitigation strategies throughout the Tulare Basin watershed. The TBWI is prepared to coordinate stakeholders to examine issues confronting the watershed in a changing climate. Below are a few of the subjects Tulare Basin resource managers will need to address:

- The Tulare Basin is home to almost one hundred special status species. Many of these species will need to migrate upslope under a warmer climate. Wide-scale conversion of habitat to agriculture will limit upland migration, while the channelization of creeks and streams will impact riparian corridor migrations. How can watershed land managers work together to identify and protect key corridors for upslope migration?
- Valley agriculture receives a large portion of its surface water from the Delta watershed, but these water supplies are subject not only to climate variations but to policy and legislation. Valley municipalities rely largely on groundwater supplies, but this supply is largely unfit for human consumption and is severely overdrafted. The Sierra Nevada snowpack is the most secure (and proximate) water supply for the Tulare Basin. How can downstream water interests coordinate with upstream water managers to best protect water supply and quality and to optimize surface storage?
- Changing precipitation patterns increase the likelihood of flooding. Can upstream managers manage land in a way to mitigate the impact of downstream flows?

These are some of the issues that Kathy Wood McLaughlin, Tulare Basin Watershed Coordinator, and Carole Combs, Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners Executive Director, will discuss in the February 20 collaboration station.

Key words: collaboration, agriculture, wildlife, watershed